THE CONSOLATION OF DEATH.

As it was Presented to Her Highness, the Princess *Ann* of *Denmark*:

On the immature Loss of *William*, late Duke of *Glocester*.

By *Richard Burridge*.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

The Epiſtle Dedicatory.

To Her Royal Highneſs THE *PRINCESS ANN Of* Denmark.

MADAM,

ALthough Death may be ſtiled the ſummum bonum *of Mankind, yet now has he proved fatal to mortality, by depriving three Kingdoms of that Jewel, which promiſed Poſterity eternal happineſs; the many vertues of our royal Child, which outſtript his tender years, made Heaven take notice of his early piety, & thought him a bleſſing too great for Mortals to enjoy: the immature diſſolution of the late hopeful Branch has cauſed weeping grief to fly over this Iſland, for which unexpreſſible loſs can not we be happy till Death tranſports us to the Celeſtial Regions, where we may eternally be admiring that object, which the whole Nation ſo much adored whilſt ſurviving: the abſence of ſuch a ſacred Child (without whoſe converſation the joyes of Angels could not be compleat) muſt needs cut to the heart: the greateſt Orators, that ere the World produced, cannot ſufficiently condole the royal Family's ſorrow, therefore I do*

do not preſume to comfort ſuch an inſupportable affliction: I only attempt to lay this Tractate of the Conſolation of Death on the ſhrine of your benigne favour, becauſe it was occaſionally written on the too late unhappy misfortune of England, *for I am highly ſenſible that any thing of devotion finds grace in your ſight, whoſe dazling beams of unparelleld godlineſs ſtrike your admiring beholders with as much ſtupefaction, as the brightneſs of the overſhadowing Cloud did the amazed Diſciples on Mount* Tabor; *Matchleſs Lady of Piety! your royal ſelf being the only hopes great* Brittain *has now left to make her happy, I pray the Almighty King of Kings may lengthen your life with a* Neſtorian *age, that by your reſplendent Vertues we may be guided to thoſe everlaſting Manſions, where the bleſſed Duke now ſits crowned with immortality, ſo* (*divine Princeſs*) *I reſt*

Your moſt humble

and obedient

Servant

Richard Burridge.

THE

Conſolation of Death.

DEATH! what is it? it is the only receſs of the Soul from the Body into the eternal Manſions of celeſtial joys; where we ſhall be cloathed with the glorious robes of immortality, and triumphantly rejoyce in the peaceful Shades of undiſturbed Reſt.

As our days encreaſe, life decreaſes, ſo that we are hourly dying; and as it is *appointed unto all Men once to die*, what need we be deſirous of that which is always flying from us? if Man would but ſeriouſly meditate on the clogs of humane life, he would not (though many years younger than that Emperour who joyfully writ to his Nephew *Caius*, that he had eſcaped the Climacterical year) deſire to live in the miſeries thereof: if rich, he is envyed; if poor, he is ſlighted; various ſcenes of ſorrows are daily ſet before the eyes of mortality, as Sickneſs, War, Fire, Famine, Peſtilence, Loſſes, Croſſes, and a thouſand other calamities which attend the wretched ſtate of Mankind, where then can we fly from this *Bochim* or Valley of Tears for ſhel-

ter? no where, but in the Regions of Death: when *Iſrael* thought his beloved *Joſeph* had been ſlain, he refuſed to be comforted by his Sons and Daughters, ſaying, *I will go down into the Grave unto my ſon, mourning*: by which mournful expreſſion, he pathetically intimated, that no comfort could mitigate his grief till he had ſeen Death: likewiſe that moſt patient Man who dwelt in *Uz* the metropolis of *Chaldean* ſuperſtition, in his great diſtreſs and unparalleld afflictions cryed out, *Why died I not in the womb? why did I not give up the ghoſt when I came out of the belly? For now ſhould I have lien ſtill, and been quiet, I ſhould have ſlept; then had I been at reſt*; thus we are plainly ſhewed Man is not at peace till in his Tomb: there Kings are quiet from the ſeditions of their Subjects, Courtiers from the emulation of their rivals in Honour, Favourites from the diſgrace of their Princes diſpleaſure, Priſoners from their Oppreſſours, and Slaves from miſerable Bondage.

Amaz'd at Death! no; the comforts of it are ſuch, that it delivers Infants from running into actual ſin, Youth from filling the Catalogue of abominable vices, Mankind from the incumbrances of worldly affairs, and Old Age from ſupporting his tottering frailty on the Crutch: Death gives eaſe to the

the diſeaſed, and health to ſickneſs; where-fore if you find him any time viſiting you, be not ſurprized, be not daunted at his alarm, but cling to him as the *Moabiteſs* did to *Naomi*, crying *whither thou goeſt, I will go; and where thou lodgeſt, I will lodge*: ſtruggle with him for thy Soul's enlargment, as *Jacob* did with the Angel at *Peniel*; be not faint hearted, for *to die is gain*; ſeeing Death ſtand before your Face, do not timerouſly ſay (as *Ahab* did to *Elijah*) *Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy*? for he is no enemy, he is a friend to all fleſh, and to ſhew you entertain him as ſuch, courageouſly (like Saint *Paul*) cry, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt.*

Every Man endued with true *Chriſtian* courage wiſheth to be acquainted with Death, the Harbinger of bliſs; he would willingly ſit the Saddle of his pale horſe; for inſtance, when it was revealed to *Simeon, that he ſhould not ſee death before he had ſeen the Lords Chriſt*, as ſoon as he had *took Jeſus up in his armes and bleſſed God*, he claimed (being ſenſible of the inequality between humane nature and immortal bleſſings) his diſſolution; in a charming ecſtacy, he ſang, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word*; in fine, thoſe who ſeriouſly

ſeriouſly weigh the difference between Earth and Heaven, they would not with *Hezekiah* pray to have the thread of life ſpun longer, but impatiently wiſh the golden Planet may haſten his courſe on the Dial of *Ahaz*, that their pure Souls might follow the Shadow of his reflecting Beams to the all-glorious Habitations of an indulgent God: none ſtartle at Death, but ſuch whoſe Conſcience is not paſsport ſufficient through the Shadows of an eternal Change: 'tis ſuch, who dread any Diſtemper they feel to be the Meſſenger of Death, and by the advice of able Phyſicians would countermand the decree of Nature, if Gold and temporal Preſents were admitted ranſomes at ſuch a time; but as it is written in the *Goſpel*, *whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it*: therefore by a godly life make a preparative againſt Death brings your ſummons, and then Chriſt tells you, *whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it.*

Nay ſo greatly have the Ethnicks been raviſht with the glory of a future being, that *Cleombrotus* and others (if we may believe *Plutarch*) reading a Treatiſe of the immortality of the Soul, killed themſelves, ſo eager were they of their Souls happineſs before their times came: ſhall we then, who are directed by God himſelf the ready path to immortality,

immortality, and the glorious Chambers of eternal pleaſures, be outbrav'd by ſuch who had the glympſe of an after happineſs but upon truſt? no, when the time of our diſſolution comes, and the laſt ſand of our great change is dropping, like *David*, have confidence in God's grace, and with him cry, *though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod, and thy ſtafe, they comfort me:* bravely cry out in defiance, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?* in ſo doing you are *more then conquerours*, & will triumphantly ſhoot the Gulf of eternity in ſpight of all efforts that ſhall tempt your carnal deſire to tarry here.

Why ſhould Man be ſo unwilling to change for Heaven that life, which from its ſoon extinguiſhing, is compared to the ſimilitudes of Graſs, Smoak, a Flower, a Shadow, a Tale, a Hand-breadth, an Hireling, a Vapour, a Tent, a Weaver's Shuttle, all Emblems of ſhort and ſwift celerity? ſuppoſe a Man might ever live upon Earth, and was never to taſt Death, his days would be but miſerable: *Nam vita, ſi moriendi virtus abeſt, ſervitus eſt*, was the ſaying of an Heathen Philoſopher, Life without Death would be a perpetual ſervitude, who would hinder then

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his own happineſs ſo much, as not to be acquainted with Death? ah! for the great benefits which he brings with him, look for him every day, invite him to releaſe your Soul from its carnal Priſon, I am ſure it is better to be inveſted with the Robes of righteouſneſs in Heaven, than to reſide on Earth, and have ones fleſh *clothed with worms and clods of duſt.*

So many are the miſeries that attend this flitting life, that we may with *Seneca* truly cry out, *Lachrymæ nobis deerunt, antequam cauſæ dolendi*: we ſooner want tears than cauſes of ſorrow: ſo which way can we travail to the great Jubile of perpetual reſt, but by contracting a firm friendſhip with Death, who is Mortals chief friend in changing our weak frailty for ſtrength that never will decay, what greater comforts or conſolation can we requeſt of Death, than his releaſing the laborious Labourer from his toil? the poor Man from his penury? the ſtranger from a hard hearted People? the holy Man from a ſecond *Sodom* to a peaceful *Zoar*? and no Man (I think) that reflects on the various afflictions of unſteddy Fate, but what would, like afflicted *Job*, with he might be cut off; with him acknowledge *then ſhould I yet have comfort*; in Death's Territories of profound ſilence, the comfortleſs Mortal is ſure of finding

finding that *opium*, which may tranſlate his eternal ſubſtance to everlaſting reſt.

Like *Job*, argue with your ſelf, *what is my ſtrength, that I ſhould hope? and what is my end, that I ſhould prolong my life?* by no ſhifts evade the welcome news of Death, nor by uſing Paſtimes and keeping Company divert not your thoughts from contemplating your latter end; Death ſhould never be out of your mind, but always meditated on: diurnally think on your own mortality, as well as on the mortality of thoſe you love: I remember it is recorded, that *Phillip* King of *Macedonia*, nightly cauſed one to ſtrike at his chamber door, putting him in remembrance that he was a mortal Man, this example is a precedent for us to have an eye always on Death, that we may be ready to entertain ſo good a Gueſt, who brings nothing with him that is unprofitable: be ſo far from trembling at the ſight of the harmleſs Skeleton, that chearfully imbrace you him in your arms, & with the royal *Pſalmiſt* divinely ſing, *as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee O God.*

Behold! our Redeemer how he by the myſtery of an hypoſtatical Union felt the miſeries of humane nature; to make Death eaſy to us: wherefore think it a crime unpardonable

unpardonable to desert from under the Banner of such a glorious Conquerour, who came to make Death lie couchant at our feet: now if we design to follow such a Leader, let us with a noble resolution serve him: not with a cold indifferency, for that is but a sorry Soldier who follows his Emperour groaning: alass! if you would cope with Death, you must (as the great Apostle of the Gentiles exhorts *Timothy*,) *endure hardness, as a good Souldier of Jesus Christ*: you that are signed with the Cross, the sacred badge of Christianity, challenge Death for your deliverance from this terrestrial imprisonment, for when he has given you a Pass from the miseries of this life to enter the Verge of eternity, and you can positively assure Christ you *have fought a good fight*, then may you claim your reward for faithful service in these words of the Apostle, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Rejoyce when Death comes to shut up the last day of your life, from the moment of your bidding it adieu, begins the minute of an eternal birth day: O the comforts of Death? it is an introduction from wo to weal, from grief

grief to joy, from ſorrow to pleaſure, from thirſt to the Fountains of life, from hunger to a plentiful Table, from ſickneſs to health, from miſery to redundant happineſs, and to the preſence of *Chriſt, who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords:* Death is the chiefeſt gift which God has to beſtow on his Children here: I remember to have read that the Prieſteſs of *Bacchus* riding up an Hill towards his Fane to ſacrifice, the Beaſts tyred, whereupon her two Sons relieved them and drew her up to her journey's end; for this dutiful piece of ſervice, ſhe begged of the Gods, that they would be pleaſed, to give her Children the beſt thing they could beſtow on Man, they told her they would reward her Sons the next day, with the beſt gift Heaven could give Mortality: the next morning going to ſee her Sons, ſhe found them dead: by this fiction we may ſee the Theology of the Heathens did allow Death to be the beſt reward Heaven could beſtow on Mankind.

Who is it can refuſe being familiar with Death? ſeeing he is the beſt Company God can recommend to us; no *Chriſtian* (in my opinion) would deſire his abſence, ſince the benefits that do accrew to us by our converſation with him, return to ſo good an account,

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as to bring us to be acquainted with him whom the *Preacher* calls *the roſe of Sharon, and the lilie of the valleys:* if any are loath to meet Death, it is the Fool who *hath ſaid in his heart there is no God.*

Death is the mitigation of God's wrath; out of the Fountain of his mercies ſprung mortality, that over the calm ſtreams thereof Death might waſt us to a Bleſſed ſtate of immortality again; let us boldly launch out into the Ocean of Eternity, to ſail to the Port where none but Angels harbour; with Saint *Auguſtine* cry out to God, *quæram te, ut vivat anima,* I will ſeek thee that my Soul may live: deſpiſing according to your baptiſmal Vow, all the pomps and vanities of this wicked World, take care you have your *wedding garment* on againſt Death comes to give you notice, that *Jeſus* is coming to ſee how your Lamps are plyed with Oyl, & and being thus prepared for your Saviour's reception, he leads you to the preſence of his Father, where is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures ever turning on the axel of eternal years: thus Death to the Righteous is but the change of a bad life for a better, and Saint *John* the Divine aſſures us, that he heard a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, *Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea,*

ſaith

saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

No Man is out of the reach of Fate, so knowing he must die, *and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him*, imbrace Death as a bosome friend; besides what Man is so unwise to shun it, when he might have an immortal life, for a life of pain and misery? for a life that gives nothing without trouble as the Poet hints,

----------Nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalitas------

Ah! if we would but weigh Death in an even Ballance, we should soon find the great difference between living and dying, by an utter detestation of mortality; we should be so far from solliciting to reside in the weak frailty of humane nature, that we should be ever wishing Death would break the chain of brittle life to release the Soul from the imprisonment of a corporeal Goal; the *Greeks* very significantly call the Body *Soma quasi Sema*, that is, the Sepulcher of the Soul, for so long as Man was surviving, so long they reckoned the Soul contrary to its immortal nature confined in the frail Mansion of a carnal Grave: consider then this confinement of the Soul, and by how much the more

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we ſhould be in love with life, by ſo much the more we ſhould rejoyce at the news of its diſſolution; Death bringing the tidings of tranſlating us to immortality, would be more harmonious to our ears, than the ſweet harmony the Sphears joyn to the melodious notes of ever rejoycing Angels; the echo of the tidings would parallize the raviſhing concord of thoſe charming lays which filled the *etherial* Pallaces of Heaven *when the Morning Stars ſang together, and all the Sons of God ſhouted for joy:* commenting ſeriouſly on the perplexities of this life, what can we count the rich man's riches? Death; what can we count the poor man's happineſs? Death: what can we count the ſick man's eaſe? Death: what can we count the melancholly man's mirth? Death: or what can we count the healthy Man's beſt health? Death: all this and much more is Death: Death gives us a total diſcharge from all miſeries whatſoever on Earth.

I have read of a ſort of People called the *Drauſie*, who at the birth of their Children weep; but at their death rejoyce, and with their Friends make merry: thus if we would reflect on the miſeries mankind is born to as well as them, we ſhould not much deviate from their cuſtome: alaſs! how great

and many are the ſorrows which a man runs through from the Womb to the Tomb: the poor Babe comes weeping into the World, as if by an inſtinct of Nature, it was ſenſible of the calamities it was to undergoe in the ſorrowful pilgrimage of this inſtable life.

Alas! who would deſire to live upon Earth, where ſuch imperfections of Nature is daily preſented to our ſight? ſome lame, ſome blind, ſome deaf, ſome dumb, ſome luniatick, ſome poſſeſſed, ſome bewitched, ſome leprous, ſome ſick, ſo that we may properly call the World an Hoſpital cram'd with all the maladies of Gods diſpleaſure, or a Houſe of mourning, where Parents are daily weeping for the loſs of Children; Children for Parents, Widdows for Husbands; Friends for Friends; ſome for loſſes by fire; ſome for loſſes by debts; ſome for loſſes by Robbers; ſome for loſſes by Sea; ſome for one loſs, and ſome another: inſomuch that if they would rightly apply theſe grievances to practical conſiderations of Death, he would be oftner called upon than he is, to relieve their afflictions: Dear Death! it is the Compaſs by which we muſt ſteer our courſe to the Haven

of everlasting safety; of Death is born immortality, of immortality a celestial Empire, and of a celestial Empire eternal rest: for so great benefits and comforts shall we not love Death? not admire him? not think on him? we are then ingrateful to our selves, and envy our own happiness; of which were we but sensible, we should scarce, was a destroying Angel to fly over our Houses now, as he did over the *Egyptians*, to slay our first-born or our selves either, sprinkle the lintels of the doors, as the *Israelites* did, unless it was a command of God as that was, to escape the wrath of the Heavenly slaughterer: yet Man is so enveloped with the deceiving pleasures of this life, that though he sees so many miserable spectacles daily before his Eyes, yet he desires to live; doth he desire to live? yes, though ten thousand times as many miseries more were thrown from Heaven, to afflict him for his darling sin.

That Man should be afraid of a thing that is no Creature! Death is no substance; therefore when *Adrian* the Emperour asked a Philosopher what Death was, he answered, an eternal sleep, the dissolution of Bodies, the rich Man's fear, the poor Man's wish,

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an inevitable event, an uncertain pilgrimage, a robber of life, the father of ſleep, the flight of life, the departure of the living, and reſolution of all things.

As Death and diſeaſes know no faces, but will compel all to pay the debt that is due to Nature, pay it without piming, and when all comes to all you will find Death no Death, but a going to God, and God's coming to us; if a Man dyes he ſhall live again,

The brighteſt days have gloomy dawnings,
But riſe again in ſplended mornings.

Had man been capable of knowing the miſery of life, before he received it, he would have been very loth to accept it; and again if Death were not in our power how willingly ſhould we deſire it more than we fear it, but Man is always of a croſs nature, the Mariner ſails through all weathers to gain the Port, but when Death comes to put us into our ſafe Port, we ſhun it as a Rock or Quick-ſand; alaſs! if we are ſo loth to go to God, it is a manifeſt token of little love to God, who only ſends Death to free us from all worldly injuries, to put a period to miſery, to free us from corporal infirmities, to free us from bodily labours, and eaſe us of all cares and troubles: God ſends Death to invite us

to the fulneſs of Grace, perfection of glory, inſeparable fellowſhip with Chriſt, and to ſettle us in our own Countrey of *Paradiſe*.

True *Chriſtians* ſhould fear Sin, and not Death: for that Soul that is afraid of dying is but in a bad caſe for Heaven: the fears of Death multiply evils, but Faith diminiſhes them: the good man durſt dye, and deſires to dye: it ſhews a true Chriſtian courage to deſire Death, through which he is ſpying at immortal glory, beholding life that never dyes, and ſees the glorious beams of that morning ſpreading over the ſpacious Chambers of Heaven that hath no eve nor ending: compare this life with Death, and you will clearly ſee, how Death which ſeems to diſpoſſeſs us of all we eſteem dear in this World, put us in poſſeſſion of more than we deſerve: alas! here we covet to be cottaged up in a houſe of clay, whoſe foundation is duſt, when Death would bring us to an habitation of everlaſting joys: ſo miſtake not the term of happineſs by calling that Death which is life for ever more.

Death is the regeneration of the Soul, it is new born when man dies: for this new birth let no trepidations or qualms of fear breed on your heart, Death only comes to revive you

in his arms of ſerenity, joy, and peace, alaſs! had death been evil, *Cain* had been ſlain for his barbarous fratricide, his pardon of life, not his puniſhment of marking made him to cry out *My puniſhment is greater than I can bear*: he had rather have been ſeated in the houſe of Death, than have been a vagabond as he was upon Earth, for all motions ſtirring towards the end of life, tend to reſt: call then for Death to releaſe your heaven born ſoul from this earthly confinement: be not daunted like Atheiſts for fear of a *non eſſe*, nor ſtartled like Libertines for fear of a *male eſſe*, for there is certainly an endleſs futerity which the Soul ſhall dwell in after this life, and *whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved*: as ſoon as Death has diſcourſed with you, your Soul ſhall ſup that night with *Chriſt* in *Paradiſe*: this is the true tranſmigration of ſouls from miſery to joy, and not from body to body as *Pythagoras* vainly thought: how conſolatory then might we make Death to us by thinking on his arreption of ſouls to Heaven? Death only comes to give a ſuperhumane Being to Man, and to let us no more ſeek the Benedictions of God, but eternally to enjoy the GOD of Benedictions.

Nothing is ſo profitable as Death, therefore no miſery can be more capital to Man then the frailty of humane life; from whence all croſſes, diſcords, and perturbations of mind are derived; how many feeling extremities a man goes through before his life reaches the winter of hoary age, which makes a ſtrange transformation of his weak nature, his head ſhaking, his ſight dimm, his jaws fallen, his gums toothleſs, his veins wither'd, his marrow dry'd, his bones ſapleſs, his ſtomach phlegmatick, his joynts feeble, his limbs numb'd, his blood cold, in a word the whole Machine of his feeble body out of order, ſo if it may be ſaid without offence to Heaven, it is better for that Man that muſt be born, to meet his Grave as ſoon as he enters the Verge of this troubleſome, and always perplexed life.

There remaineth a reſt to *the people of God*, who then would be ſo beſotted with a lethargick drowſineſs of mind, as not to leave Father, leave Mother, leave Brother, leave Siſter, leave Relations, leave Friends, and all things whatſoever we eſteem moſt dear in this World, to enter into the reſt of God? *For he that is entered into his reſt, he alſo hath ceaſed from his own works, as God did from his*;

O!

O! let us who are in love with our precious Souls *labour therefore to enter into that reſt*, where peace redounds for ever more.

Through the Houſe appointed for all living, we paſs to Heaven, the glorious Kingdom where the Elect and faithful Servants of God ſhall for ever Reign with him; Death tranſports us to ſit under the Canopy of that Throne where is joy without ſorrow, reſt without labour, dignity without fear, riches without loſs, health without ſickneſs, abundance without defection, perpetuity without corruption, and bliſs without calamity; Heaven is the Region where no bitterneſs takes place; a Region where no Thunders, Lightnings, Tempeſt, Hail, extream cold, nor exceſſive heat ſhall annoy us more; there Prodigies ſhall not fright us with the dire aſpects of jarring Planets; there the harſh language of ſorrow ſhall no more invade our ears with terrors; the dialect in the bright Empyrean, where is erected on the ſupreameſt loft of Eternity the Throne of God, is all ecſtatical joy: once Death conveys us to thoſe Regions of never deficient happineſs, there ſhall we be in communion with Seraphins, and Cherubins, Archangels, and Angels; there ſhall we be familiar

familiar with bleſſed *Michael*, who caſt proud *Lucifer* and his rebellious aſſociates from Heaven; there ſhall we be correſpondent with *Gabriel*, who on the happy Day of Man's Salvation with Legions of the Heavenly Hoſts ſang to admiring Shepherds the ſweet Carol of *gloria in excelſis*; Death brings our Souls to be ſpectators of the glorious Cavelcade of bleſſed Confeſſors, triumphantly holding the Croſs over the immaculate Lamb, changing then the Motto *in hoc ſigno vinces* for *in hoc ſigno obtinuimus cœlum*, by this ſign have we won Heaven.

Death having ſeparated the pure ſubſtance of our Souls from theſe clods of dirt, then *Adam* ſhall ſee all his Grand-Children the Sons of *Enos* together: *Abraham* all his faithful ſeed: *Job* ſhall ſee his Children: then ſhall *John* the Baptiſt ſee his Penitents: *Peter* his Converts: *Paul* his Followers: the Prophets of the Lord ſee all the Lord's People: then ſhall God ſee all his Sons, and *Chriſt* all his Members: when Death has brought all Mankind to Heaven, what a glorious appearance will there be, what a raviſhing Heavenly Quire, what an Anthem ſhall there harmonouſly be ſung, and we be made welcome by the mutual, admirable, and ineffable em-

embracements of God and *Chriſt*; methinks I ſee *Jeſus* and his believers like *Joſeph* & *Benjamin*, falling upon each others Necks, not weeping but ſhouting for joy; how will the whole Hierarchy of ſhining Spirits rejoyce to ſee the Saints, Apoſtles, the whole Army of Martyrs, & the holy Church throughout all the World meet in Heaven with Palms in their hands, and Crowns on their Heads, to ſing *hallelujah*, *hallelujah* to the King of Kings for ever and ever.

Ah! Death is welcom to a good Man at any time, he is ſenſible he ſends Souls to enjoy themſelves to eternity with the knowledge of one another; Death guides us to the Land where the Father ſhall find his Children, the Children their Parents, Kindred know Kindred, and Friend his Friend; for if *Dives* in the ſtate of Damnation knew *Lazarus*, when he liſted up his Eyes from *Hell* and ſaw him in *Abraham*'s boſome, no doubt but thoſe in a ſtate of happineſs, ſhall know one another, to make the greatneſs of celeſtial bliſs perfect: O! what bliſs will this be that mortals ſhall hereafter meet, and know one another in a Kingdom that is all love without falſhood; in what ſolid joys will they greet one another in the regions of endleſs pleaſures; O! how the indulgent Father, and as indulgent Mother

Mother will rejoyce for finding again their Children, for the loſs of whom they had ſhedded night and day many tears, who, like *Rachel*, *would not be comforted, becauſe they were not*; how the poor Orphans will cling to their Parents, ſince whoſe privation they had ſuffered many miſeries on Earth; Husbands enjoy their Wives company with an inſeparable Union; how lovingly will long parted Kindred imbrace one another, and friends rejoyce at friends eternal welfare.

Since Death is the Harbinger of Felicity, let us be as deſirous of appearing before God as *Job* was, when he fervently cryed, *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his ſeat!* to claim the ineſtimable *promiſe that he hath promiſed us, even eternal life:* what Mortal will let his knowledge be ſo intoxicated as to ſlight this kindneſs of never diminiſhing bleſſings, for the allurements of thoſe temporal temptations which King *Solomon* (the wiſeſt of Men) ſtiles *vanity of vanities*, and emphatically backs it with *all is vanity*; ſo that there is nothing in this World that can indulge our affections with the love of it, as Riches, Honour, Preferment, Crowns, Scepters, Diadems, Pal-

Pallaces, Attendance, or the like, but what
s *vanity and vexation of Spirit.*

O! the depth of the goodneſs and love of
God to Man, in extending his mercy ſo far as
o make us mortal; though the Ambition of
ur firſt Parents in *Eden* aſpired to be Gods,
crime ſo great, that it could not be expia-
ed but by the ſacrifice of a bleeding *Jeſus*,
et amidſt his curſes for their grand diſobe-
ience, was he graciouſly pleaſed to make
miſerable Poſterity happy by the privation of
ife; by dying we ſhall retrieve the happy
ſtate of immortality again: immortality! O
he ſound of it! leaves ſuch a charming echo
n a Soul raviſhed for liberty, that were it
ot a ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, violence
would quickly give it paſſage to its native
Orb; violence would quickly invade the
Empire of Death, and bravely proclaim the
voice of War before his Pallace gates: but
God's time muſt be our time, a Man muſt reſt
contented with God's pleaſure, and with *Job*
ſay, *all the days of my appointed time will I*
wait, till my change come: whenever it ſhall
pleaſe the wiſe diſpoſer of all things to ſum-
mon us before his Throne of grace, with a
Chriſtian like courage ſhake hands with Death,
nd thank him for the news of fetching you

to

to take poſſeſſion of an everlaſting Patrimony in the Heavenly *Canaan*, where ſorrows never ſhall afflict you more.

As the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *What man is he that liveth and ſhall not ſee death? ſhall he deliver his Soul from the hand of the grave?* no: theſe Interrogatories can not be reſiſted by Man, *The days of our years are threeſcore years & ten: & if by reaſon of ſtrength they be fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength labour and ſorrow*: why then ſhould we be afraid of the comfortable news of Death, which brings us the Expreſs of our Coronation in Heaven? alaſs? Death is no ſuch bugbear as we take it to be, he is tame as a young Lion brought up by hand; and where the armour of godlineſs glitters in his eyes, he comes upon terms of capitulation, and admits you with Colours flying to march through his Territories without the leaſt moleſtation or let as may be.

What tongue is able to expreſs! pen to write! or ſoul to conceive the joys which Death brings us to? we cannot from the unfathomed depth of fancie retrieve thoughts high enough to deſcribe them; there will our ears be entertained with the ecſtatical charms of Angels, ſinging their moſt melodious lays, and unanimouſly celebrating the triumphs

of

of their eternal King: in charming notes exceeding the harmonious concords of *the sweet influences of Pleiades*, or other the concurring Constellations tuning to the sweet Musick of their revolving orbs: Death! it's the Pilot that brings Men to the Harbour where *God shall wipe all tears from their eyes*, and make us eternally happy.

If *Orpheus* and *Amphion* (as the Poets sing) by the harmony of their Lutes could incite Stones and Trees to dance after them, how much more should the harmony of Death invite us to follow him, to a City, *whose builder and maker is God*? alas! *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few days, and full of trouble*, why then should we covet to remain in sorrow? and beg of Heaven to avert that stroke, which only cuts us off from the miseries of a burthensome life? alas! what is life in this World? it is full of labour, corruptible, full of bitterness, the Mistress of evils, and Maid to Hell: here griefs perplex us, thirsts make faint, air blast us, heats tire us, high feeding inflames the blood, fasting macerates, age makes you crooked, and infirmity breaks us; who then must deliver us from these discomforts of humane frailties? Death; it is Death that will

bring

bring you under the protection of that God, who will feed us with unheard of bleſſings: alaſs! will Death bring us to ſuch happineſs! who then would be ſhy of him? but entertain him as kindly as *Lot* did the Meſſengers of *Sodom*'s deſtruction; let us now prepare our ſelves againſt Death comes, and as ſoon as we are bleſſed with his preſence, joyfully cry out in the words of the royal Pſalmiſt, *O God, thou art my God, my Soul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is: to ſee thy power and thy glory, Becauſe thy loving kindneſs is better than life:* caſt your eye on Death with a ſmiling countenance, for once he viſits you in earneſt, it is with Orders from the King of immortal Subjects, to guard your Soul to that Kingdom where bliſs abounds for evermore.

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